

"UNIDENTIFIED NAME"
Lancaster Pike, west of Radnor Chester Road
Radnor Township
Delaware County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-192

HABS

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction
120 South Third Street
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

"NANTMELL HALL"

Street Address: Lancaster Pike west of Radnor-Chester Road,
Radnor Township, Delaware County, Pennsylvania

Present Owner: Matthew Weinstein, Chetwynd Apartments,
Rosemont, Pennsylvania

Present Occupant: None

Present Use: Golf course club house

Brief Statement
of Significance: This structure is a typical eighteenth century
fieldstone farmhouse, which has been badly
mutilated by constant use as a public golf club.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: Richard Orme (original Penn purchaser); John Morgan (died 1744); his son, Mordecai Morgan, from 1744 to his own death in 1807; latter's heirs jointly until 1808; 1808 deeded to Hannah Morgan, spinster; in 1848 owned by Isaac Palmer; came into possession of Joseph Johnson in 1848, later of his son and daughter, Mrs. David Sands Brown, from her to her daughter, Mrs. Samuel Chew, whose Chew heirs owned it until about 1957, when sold to present owner, after over 200 years in possession of relatives of John Morgan, the present generation being his 5th great grandchildren. (Sources: Will of John Morgan, dated October 6, 1744, proved at Philadelphia (on file at City Hall, Philadelphia) leaves to his son Mordecai "all that messuage or tenement plantation situate in Radnor called by the name of Hall of Nantmell which I purchased from Richard Orme, deceased, together with about 200 acres." Nantmell adjoined Vanor to west (see report on Vanor). For death of Mordecai Morgan see Delaware County Admin. Book 1, p. 79, and for sale of Nantmell by his heirs, Delaware County Deed Book I, p. 631. Ash's Map of Delaware County, 1848, shows it in hands of Joseph Johnson and all maps and deeds since in possession of his heirs in the Brown and Chew families.
2. Date of erection: Eighteenth century
3. Architect, builder, suppliers etc.: Nothing known although any work done towards the end of the 18th and early 19th

centuries was probably by Mordecai Morgan's son, Samuel Morgan, the Radnor carpenter-builder and Director of the Radnor Library Company, who erected Woodstock Barn nearby in 1804 (see report on Woodstock Barn). This was the early home of Samuel Morgan.

4. Original plans, construction etc.: No information
5. Notes on alterations and additions: No information
6. Important old views and references: A photograph of about 1896 is reproduced opposite page 360 in Thomas Allen Glenn, Merion in the Welsh Tract (Norristown: 1896).

B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure:

This property was never a suburban residence but always a farm, a proprietary farm in the Morgan tenure, and after the Johnson and Brown and Chew families took title to it, a tenant farm owned by them. Early in the twentieth century it became the St. Davids Golf Club when this private club was organized, but after it moved to a new location, it was rented to a public course, the Main Line Golf Club.

The owner, Mordecai Morgan, was visited by a British raiding party on September 19, 1777, under Colonel Harcourt, and goods worth 45 pounds sterling were taken from him. (Henry Graham Ashmead, History of Delaware County, Pennsylvania, p. 681)

The name Nantmell Hall comes from Nantmele, Radnorshire, Wales, the original home of John Evans, died 1707, father-in-law of John Morgan, Morgan having married Sarah Jones (i.e. Sarah, daughter of John, her name being in the Welsh manner).

C. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated: None known

Prepared by F. J. Dallett Date June 1958
For Radnor Historical Society

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This is an example of a typical farmhouse with a simple design and unpretentious details, but it has been maltreated in its use as a golf club.
2. Condition of fabric: Solid but mutilated

B. Technical Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: Not recorded
2. Foundations: Stone. Heavy arched construction in basement interior.
3. Wall construction: Fieldstone, plastered over and whitewashed. A modern two-story frame wing is on north (rear) side.
4. Porches: A small wooden porch has been erected around the front door (see photograph).
5. Chimneys: Brick chimney at west end remains, original; chimney at east end has been removed and fireplaces closed in.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Old front door, four vertical panels. Original rear door removed to make open doorway into modern frame extension.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Many old fine muntins and original sashes, a few replacements. There are nineteenth or twentieth century louvered shutters on three front windows of second floor.
7. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Gable roof with asbestos shingles.
 - b. Cornice, eaves: Plain wooden strip cornice.
 - c. Dormers: A modern transom-type dormer on front (south facade).

C. Technical Description of Interiors:

1. Floor plans: First Floor - Center stairhall with one room each side (originally two rooms each side but partitions removed); one large modern bar room in frame extension at North.
Second Floor - Two rooms west side, one room east side (originally two rooms), also bath on east side; also, one large room in modern frame extension at north.

2. Stairways: One original stairway in center hall. Original square balustrades with two grooves on each of four faces. Overhanging acorns, original, may still be seen above newel post on bottom of stair construction above.
3. Flooring: Original random-width floor boards in west room, first floor. Others throughout house are replacements with exception of a few isolated remaining random-width boards.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plastered, painted over. Many coats of thick paint, which have acted in a way as a preservative.
5. Doorways and doors: Original door frames throughout, but the doors of five panels (three horizontal, two vertical) are undoubtedly all replacements.
6. Trim: A few original baseboards remain.
7. Hardware: Modern replacements except for a few isolated hinges.
8. Lighting: Electricity
9. Heating: On the west side on both first and second floors is a heavy corner-angle fireplace (fireplaces thus were originally in the four rooms on this side); fireplace in south-east room on both floors of east side have been plastered over. The mantels on the west side are not original.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: Below level of Lancaster Pike, close to the road, on edge of surrounding public golf course. The building faces south (by south-east).
2. Enclosures: Hedge along Lancaster Pike (Route 30)
3. Outbuildings: Original fieldstone and frame barn and original fieldstone and frame outbuilding, both closed and virtually abandoned except for storage purposes of Club. Cottage (see report on Golf Club Cottage).
4. Walks: Gravel drive in front, dirt path to Golf Club Cottage.
5. Landscaping: A few trees and golf links.